

Creating a City Holiday and Day of Service In honor of César E. Chávez, an American icon

A LETTER FROM REGINA ROMERO

DATE: March 3, 2014

Dear Friend,

Many of you know that I grew up in a farmworking family near Yuma, not far from where César Chávez was born. I listened to my father's stories of what a brave man he was, and how he helped farmworkers get contracts for the most basic working conditions - like rest periods, toilets in the fields, clean drinking water, hand-washing facilities, and the correct tools to do the job.

And then he took it further. He worked to ban discrimination in employment and sexual harassment of women workers in the fields. He created the first union contracts providing parental leave for working families. He fought for the first comprehensive union medical, dental and vision benefits, as well as a ban on pesticide exposure, long before regulatory action by the environmental protection agency.

Chávez worked tirelessly for nearly forty years to improve the wages, benefits, and working conditions for farmworkers and their families.

Tomorrow, March 4, at City Hall, I will be asking my colleagues on Mayor and Council to support creating a paid holiday for City employees and a day of service for the people of Tucson – to remind ourselves and future generations of what he gave to the country.

Tucson is a place that values diversity and respects all cultures, and we have a history of leading the nation on issues of equality. As we learned with SB 1070 and SB 1062, equality and the economy are one and the same.

Celebrating the life and legacy of Chávez is the right thing to do. And this is the right time to do it.

I know that all of us want Tucson to lead the nation in being a place where you can find high-wage, long-term jobs, and be able to retain young talent from the U of A and Pima College.

This Mayor and Council is working to make that happen. To attract and retain the best and brightest workers, you need to treat everyone with respect. Tucson is the City in Arizona where we welcome immigrants, where we stand solidly with the LGBT community. We welcome you without regard to the color of your skin or your lifestyle.

It's a place where we can be PROUD to honor Dr. Martin Luther King and César E. Chávez, and PROUD to pay good wages and benefits to our employees for the important work they do to improve our community.

I co-founded the Cesar Chavez Holiday Coalition more than 10 years ago and I'm proud, and looking forward to, this vote tomorrow. I hope you will join me at City Hall at 5:30 pm to help make it happen. Social justice icon Dolores Huerta, who worked alongside Chavez for nearly 40 years, will be speaking to Mayor and Council in favor of the idea. I hope you will help us make history for the City of Tucson.

In Community,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Regina Romero". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Regina" and last name "Romero" written in a single line.

Regina Romero, Tucson City Council, Ward 1

P.S. We have received nearly 40 letters of support from businesses and organizations representing tens of thousands of people from diverse constituencies - from faith-based organizations to conservation to human rights and more. You will be in good company tomorrow!